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PREACHED BEFORE THE

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

ON THE THIRD OF MAY, 1795,

AT

GREAT SAINT MARY'S CHURCH.

K
BY JOHN MAINWARING, B.D. MA. 1750.

LADY MARGARET'S PROFESSOR IN DIVINITY,

AND LATE FELLOW OF SAINT JOHN'S COLLEGE.

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S. F. R. M. O. N.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

ON THE THIRD OF MAY

GEORGE TOWN HALL CHURCH

BY JOHN W. WAINING, B.D.

PRINTED BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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NOT

TO THE MEMBERS
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AS A TESTIMONY
OF
THE AUTHOR'S ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE
IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED.

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S E R M O N, &c.

2 THESS. ~~1~~ 7.

II.

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY DOETH ALREADY WORK.

THERE are particular circumstances in the conduct of those who first promulgated the Gospel, which, exclusive of their general character, increase its credibility, and add one more to the many other marks of its authenticity and truth. For those excellent persons, not deterred themselves by the difficulties and discouragements of their perilous undertaking, disdained to deceive their followers with flattering hopes of their own immediate or complete success in converting the world. On the contrary, though convinced that the Gospel would be unspeakably beneficial on the whole, and spread with rapidity, and finally prevail, they frequently express their apprehensions, or rather, their certain foreknowledge, that the purity of its precepts would not be preserved; that vice and error would not be eradicated; that peace and righteousness, so congenial to the spirit of Christianity, would not be established: that, beside the

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violent opposition to be expected from open and avowed enemies; it would be betrayed by false brethren, who, from conceit of their own wisdom, would corrupt the faith; and disgraced by degenerate professors, who, from ambitious or mercenary motives, would apostatize from it.

How very far removed was such a conduct from enthusiasm and from art? A fanatic would never have thought of entertaining his hearers, or his correspondents, with accounts of so discouraging a nature; nor would a hypocrite have betrayed the discrediting particulars of his own plan, by foretelling the depravity of those who should hereafter embrace it. In such declarations we recognize the simplicity of truth: and, when we compare them with the corresponding events by which they were followed, we acknowledge the reality of divine inspiration.

BUT although the Apostle, in the words of the text, applies the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY to the wrong principles and practices which very early began to appear in the infant church, and led the way to those dreadful corruptions which he foresaw would disgrace its more mature and established state; yet, in a sense still further extended, it may very properly be applied to the general condition of the world at large, from the earliest down to the present times.

THE first introduction of Sin and Death—The apostacy of mankind from the worship of the one true God—The long, and wide-spread night of Pagan ignorance—The frequent relapses of the chosen People, terminated by their obstinate infidelity, and savage treatment of their divine Messiah, and his faithful followers—The persecutions of the Heathen Emperors so often renewed against the rising Church—The distracting Heresies and Schisms of the Christian sects—The subtil and successful enterprize of the Arabian

Arabian Impostor—More particularly, the errors and corruptions of the Papal system—and lastly, The unhappy perversion of Protestantism itself:—all these are so many distinct parts in that MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, which God, in his infinite wisdom, has thought proper to permit for the punishment of atrocious wickedness; for the proof of exemplary virtue, or for other important ends of a moral administration.

As the same hostile spirit which gave so much disturbance to our Lord and his Apostles, has been working ever since, and is still active whenever it finds dispositions and occasions adapted to its purposes, it might be useful to consider it under all its different appearances, and to trace the effects of it through the several stages of its baneful progress. But as this would lead us far beyond the compass of a single discourse, our inquiry must be chiefly confined to those effects of it, which the most nearly concern ourselves, which are observable in the present, and may influence the future course of human affairs, and may therefore furnish us with maxims and reflexions particularly applicable to our own situation.

WHILE the Apostles were living, the mischiefs occasioned by this spirit were greatly restrained, but broke out with increased violence as soon as those faithful guardians of religion were removed. The unbelieving Jew, the Judaizing Christian, the heretical Teacher, the persecuting Pagan, had then a fairer opportunity for the pursuance and promotion of their several designs. The early persecutions, and other calamities immediately arising partly from these, and partly from other causes, though extremely severe for the time they lasted, were as nothing compared with the remoter consequences of such disunion and disorder.

To reform the worship of his own country first, and afterwards that of the Jewish and Christian communities, was the declared purpose of the crafty Arabian,—most artfully pretending, that he was commissioned to atchieve THAT by the salutary terrors of the sword, which neither the mild methods of argument and persuasion, nor even the awful and commanding evidence of miracles had been able to accomplish. For although Christianity, both by its general spirit, and particular precepts, affords the strongest security to peace and harmony, yet we know that it was made by its nominal professors a most powerful instrument of discord and dissension. Nothing indeed more contributed to the success of that bold Adventurer, than the vexatious heresies and schisms, which distracted and disgraced the Christian societies.

BUT another, and still worse consequence of such dreadful deviations from the simplicity and purity of the Gospel doctrines, was that PORTENTOUS POWER established in the CHURCH itself. The unchristian contentions for dominion and supremacy, carried on by those who set themselves up for its fathers and defenders, ended at last in the decisive triumph of the Roman Pontif, who, of all the contending Bishops, found the occurrences of the times most favourable to his views. The weakness and supineness of the rulers on the declension of that empire; the general prevalence of ignorance and superstition, and other concurring accidents, emboldened him to assert, and enabled him to support, his extravagant claims and pretensions. The foundation of his claims and the rule of his polity was furnished to him by his predecessor in the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY,—the corrupt and apostate Church of Jerusalem. How faithfully the Church of Rome has copied the craft of her elder sister, how far surpassed her in the dark and deep-laid designs of ambition and avarice, I need not observe to THIS Audience: I will only add, that of all the trials, which, in the various vicissitudes

situdes of human affairs, religion has undergone, this of its greatest prosperity in appearance, was, in reality, the most severe and perilous. No institution indeed, not guaranteed by an almighty Power, not under the constant superintendence of a protecting Providence*, could possibly have survived abuses so terrible, so extensive, and so lasting as those of **POPERY**. Not only the existence of such a Power was foretold, but the nature and character of it was exactly delineated some centuries before its appearance, as the greater part of Protestant interpreters are agreed. The time of its continuance is also noted, though with some degree of obscurity, as is common to prophecies before their completion. As symptoms of its declension began to appear soon after the revival of letters, and have increased ever since, and are now so strong, as to raise an expectation of its approaching ruin; the reasonings of sober inquirers and reveries of fanciful enthusiasts are naturally employed upon those prophecies in which it is described. But whatever the term of its **DURATION** may be, it is much to be feared, that even after its downfall its fatal effects will still continue. For, as the pride of **POPERY**, and the arrogance of a vain **PHILOSOPHY** equally proceed from the same common parent, the spirit of Anti-christ, it is easy to perceive the connection between them.

THE actual attainment of spiritual supremacy, and the impious pretensions to infallibility, easily led to intolerance and persecution for religious opinions. These principles, as monstrous as the claims which produced them, so long as they could be maintained, effectually subdued every effort of reason and good-sense by the error

* O Deus æterne! (said the Emperor of that time) nisi tu vigilaris, quàm malè esset mundo, quem nos regimus, ego miser venator, & sceleratus ille **JULIUS**?

O eternal God! were it not for thy watchful Providence, what would become of this poor world, governed, as it is, by me, a miserable hunter, and that rascal **JULIUS**.

terror they inspired. But the progress of learning, and the advancement of science about the time of the Reformation, and especially in the last and present century, have so enlightened the minds of men, and so effectually discredited the absurdities of the Romish Church, particularly those of superstition and bigotry, that there is no ground at present for fearing the return of such evils. I wish we had been as secure from those, which have succeeded,—I mean the ABUSES OF REASON AND LEARNING,—the DANGEROUS, DOMINEERING INFLUENCE OF A PRESUMPTUOUS, SELF-SUFFICIENT, FREE-THINKING PHILOSOPHY.

As the origin of these evils, if traced up to their true cause, will be discovered, as already hinted, in the Papal system; so the progress of them, if distinctly marked, and fully developed, would constitute the history of FREE-THINKING.

As soon as the opposers of that system were sufficiently strong, the errors and vices of it were pointed out and exposed with that zeal and ardour which the occasion justified. The minds of men, sunk in ignorance and enslaved by superstition for so long a period, were strongly affected by the sudden change in their condition. Finding themselves so happily released from their mental and spiritual thralldom, many fell into excesses on the opposite side; were emboldened to throw off all restraint whatsoever; and (as an illustrious Writer most happily expresses this kind of absurdity) began to consider their very girdles and garters as bonds and shackles. It is natural to imagine, that after the use and exercise of reason had been so cruelly confined, and on all serious subjects proscribed and interdicted; when that POWER by which even Thought itself had been fettered and imprisoned, had lost its influence, and was no longer able to maintain such tyrannical restraints,—it is natural to expect that reason and liberty, thus re-instated in their

their fair claims, would be extended beyond their just bounds. No sooner were the rights of private judgment vindicated, and the free exercise of it established, than a set of writers under the imposed title of FREE-THINKERS, boldly assumed the office of guides and instructors-general, and obtruded on the Public their crude and fantastic opinions of every kind, but especially on the subjects of religion and government.

THE opposers of Popery may, I think, be ranged under three distinct classes, very different each from the other in temper and character, sentiments and designs:

THE first class consists of those, who proved to the world the inestimable value of FREE-INQUIRY by the noble uses to which they applied it.

IN the next class are those, who, after having bravely concurred in resisting a spiritual usurpation, and in relinquishing a corrupt communion; instead of cordially and devoutly uniting under the one, sole, supreme Director and "Head over all things to the " Church," enlisted under human leaders, and unhappily broke into sects and parties; their notions of LIBERTY, too refined and romantic, not admitting any bond of union, or articles of peace, which might hold them together. It is painful, but it may be PROPER, to remark the ill effect of such notions on the mind and temper: and never was it seen more strongly, than in those intestine dissensions, uncharitable feuds, and hostile animosities, which harass and distract the learned disputants, even when contending for unessential forms, and points of mere speculation, unimportant, or unintelligible. And although the unhappy disputes among the first Protestants could not invalidate the reasons for which they separated from the Romish Church, yet such dreadful disunion in the

the friends of Christianity was very hurtful to its interests by affording matter of triumph both to Papists and Infidels. Even this we may fairly consider as an inferior or subordinate part in the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY; for the principal and predominant part is now to be noted in the third and last of these classes. And, in this respect, I am very apprehensive that the nations and states of the Reformed persuasion have more to answer for than they are aware of, almost all the infidel, and much the greater part of immoral ~~publications~~ *productions* so instrumental to the apostacy of these latter times, having been written and printed in Protestant countries, although the ravages of a plague or a pestilence are not more to be dreaded, than the influence of such books on the mind and imagination.

THE Authors of them, not contented with combating the errors of Popery, conceived an hostility to all established systems, and a hatred against all institutions as so many clogs and encroachments on the natural independence of the human mind. To overthrow received opinions, and substitute in their room the most wild and absurd that fancy could invent, or impiety suggest, was the chief object of their laboured researches.

IN PHILOSOPHY indeed they were so modest, or so dull, as hardly to aim at the merit of invention. As the NATURALISM, which is espoused by the greater part, consists in attributing to second causes a power and energy that can only belong to the first, it wholly excludes a Providence, or moral Governor; and, if it admits an intelligent Ruler of the Universe, is inconsistent with itself, and utterly unintelligible.

THE SCEPTICAL principles adopted by others, and much in request of late, are equally hostile to revelation; and reprobate all Mysteries,

Myſteries, as hoſtile to reaſon, although the patrons of thoſe principles make it their ſtudy to confound the underſtanding by diſputing and perplexing the plaineſt truths.

EVERY perſon in the leaſt acquainted with the ancient philoſophic Sects, will immediately ſee how cloſely and ſervilely the moderns have copied, in their attacks on our religion, the abuſeſt tenets of the three famous Schools, founded by Zeno, Epicurus, and Pyrrho.

THE firſt of theſe, by maintaining a fatal neceſſity, and denying the liberty of the will, reduced man to a living machine. At the ſame time, they exalted him to a Divinity on the ſcore of his reaſon, and by extravagantly over-rating this endowment, encouraged that pride and preſumption, which obſtructed its improvement beyond any thing elſe.

THE ſecond, by making pleaſure his chief good, and death the extinction of his being, degraded him to the condition of a Brute. As they inverted the order of nature by ſubjecting reaſon to the dominion of ſenſe, their theory of Materialiſm was well enough ſuited to ſuch principles. The revival of ſuch a ſyſtem in an age diſtinguiſhed for its progreſs in every branch of ſcience, and enjoying the light of divine revelation, is a glaring proof how far the ſame licentious principles, which vitiate the heart, can pervert the moſt improved underſtandings.

THE laſt of theſe ſects, by carrying to an extreme the main purpoſe of an excellent principle, — that of avoiding a ſaſh precipitancy in judging and deciding, utterly deſtroyed the uſe and end of all ſober inquiry. For the SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHERS, inſtead of furniſhing their followers with prudential maxims, proper to conduct

See the Letters between the late King of Pruſſia, and M. de Voltaire.

them in the perilous voyage of human life, instead of directing them, by a right use of reason, carefully to explore, and steadily to pursue, the only course which would lead them in safety to the haven of TRUTH; left them without chart or compass to be tossed to and fro with "every wind of doctrine," and float at random on the wide ocean of UNCERTAINTY and ERROR.

WHERE doubt and diffidence are highly becoming, and really necessary, our modern SAGES are dogmatical and decisive. The deepest points of RELIGION, the most abstruse questions concerning the nature of God, and the origin of things, they determine at once, and with an almost oracular authority. They affirm, that the great BEING, whom we have been taught to consider as a pure Spirit, is mere Matter, highly organized; that Creation is a contradiction; that the world had no beginning, and will have no end, being self-existent, and the result of eternal mechanism; with other principles of a like kind, the result of which is, Order without intelligence, Regularity without design, and innumerable instances of exquisite Contrivance without a contriver—things harder to believe than any Mystery of our faith, or that account, which Moses by command of the Creator himself has transmitted to us. It is curious to see these subtle sophisters when caught and entangled in the nets of their own weaving. The more they struggle to extricate themselves, the more they are embarrassed: finding by degrees the contradictions and absurdities inseparable from their principles in what way soever explained, they have recourse to others, and these upon trial, as unsatisfactory as the former, like them, instead of removing, do but increase the difficulties, which they affect to assign as the causes of their Unbelief*.

* See the Letters between the late King of Prussia, and Monf. D'Alembert.

IN MORALS their tenets are not less false or pernicious. The discrete legislators of FORMER times, who made mankind their particular study, had found it expedient to summon to their aid the salutary influence of EARLY IMPRESSIONS;—to give to the tender and flexible temper of youth a favourable bias; and guard their minds against the constant and complicated danger from erroneous notions, corrupt principles, and pernicious examples. Indeed, from the obvious consideration, and undisputed fact, that the principle which first takes possession of the mind, will be strongest in its influence, and most lasting in its effects, we daily see, and are hardly surprised at seeing, that the grossest superstitions appear reasonable to those, who have imbibed them at the dawn of intellect: and when we also reflect, that no kind of useful knowledge can be learned or acquired, any more than religion, without early instruction, what egregious folly, what madness is it, not to give this advantage to the one, only, sure and permanent principle of human happiness?

BUT our self-appointed instructors are determined to pursue a more spirited plan. Disdaining a tame submission to the tyranny of custom, they reverse every rule of caution suggested by experience. EDUCATION, not according with their grand design of freeing the mind from all prejudice, is discarded, not only as an useless, but a noxious art:—the art of forming BIGOTS, and of rearing SLAVES. All culture of the mind, in a moral or religious view, is absurd, as preventing, or obstructing the free, uncontrouled exercise of its faculties in the search of truth. But as the extravagancies of the modern refinements on this subject are well known to this Audience, any further account of them would be tedious and unnecessary.

HAVING thus pointed out the manner, in which the MYSTERY

OF INIQUITY has exerted its influence against RELIGIOUS TRUTH, and against MORAL PRINCIPLE, let us now pursue it in its further advances, and observe its tendency in the POLITICAL SYSTEM. Adverse to every thing conducing to human happiness, it aims at the overthrow of all regular government. In this point of view, the marks of its malignity are particularly striking.

“ IF the SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE *, that main article of the new political Creed, is held forth just at the juncture when every good citizen, and true friend to his country, feels himself under the most pressing obligation to inculcate obedience, and unshaken loyalty: if, at a crisis, the most alarming that ever yet was known, the noblest talents are employed in deluding the ignorant, and enflaming the discontented: if, the better to accomplish this purpose, the Advocates of Order, and Opposers of Licentiousness are represented as the Slaves of Power, and Enemies of Reform: if the excellent principle of Toleration itself is egregiously abused, is asserted and carried to an extent inconsistent with the public safety: if the perversion of that great blessing, the liberty of the Press, is become so excessive, that unless it can be brought under better regulations, it must soon extinguish all sense of decorum, and defeat the effect of all sound instruction:—if this be the true picture of our present situation, impossible it is to explain such appearances on any common principles.” The secret source of such infatuation is that SPIRIT, the author and promoter of Delusion and Disorder, whose influence is unremitting, and whose operations have been traced through a long series of signal disasters, none of them however more formidable than those, with which the whole Christian world is now threatened.

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* See the Note at the end of the Sermon.

THE first Christians had to contend with the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY in the frightful form of PAGAN SUPERSTITION. Our forefathers at the reformation were called to resist it with equal hazard in the sanctimonious garb of POPERY. We too have our conflicts to maintain: Conflicts, not so shocking to our animal feelings, and bodily senses; yet, in respect to our minds, still more to be feared. Though not exposed, as they were, to the irresistible violence of open aggressors, we are liable to be ruined more completely by the new machinations of the INVISIBLE FOE, ever watchful to ensnare the unwary; varying the modes of his attack according to the changing circumstances of times, of affairs, or of persons; perverting the understanding and affections in different ways; and acting upon them, sometimes by his own proper and immediate influence; sometimes through the medium of his human instruments, his apt and able associates in error and seduction.

As the Divine Author of our salvation was himself exposed to the severest trials, and, in his human* capacity, made perfect through sufferings, so it seems to be the will of Providence, that the Members of his Mystical Body should, in this respect, be made conformable to their Head, all in a greater, or a less degree.

BEFORE I conclude this Discourse, the younger part of my Audience will permit me to offer a few hints to their serious consideration. As the Spirit of error and seduction is now abroad, I cannot but express a most earnest wish, that you, who are destined

* AN observation of Mr. Gibbon has occasioned the addition of these otherwise unnecessary words. "I know, says he, of but ONE religion, where the God, and the Victim are the same." This, perhaps, is one of the smartest Sophisms Infidelity can furnish. Here, by leaving out one part of Christ's nature, his Atonement is represented as an absurdity, just as by leaving out the other, the truest Believers are converted into Idolaters.

destined to be the guides and instructors of others, may YOURSELVES be guarded against wrong impressions, and especially those, to which the temper of the present times is most strongly inclined. I am the more anxious in this particular, because an opinion has lately been taken up by some zealous friends of religion, that the SEVERER STUDIES, which in this PLACE have always been encouraged very much, and pursued with singular success, are ill calculated for the promotion of piety, and, from their nature, unfavourable to it. Although some writers, distinguished for their excellence in those studies, have espoused that opinion, I think that the contrary supposition might easily be supported by satisfactory arguments, as well as by examples taken both from among the living and the dead, which, if singly considered, would have very great weight.

HOWEVER, it is still true, that a system of Education, which has for its chief object the cultivation and improvement of the reasoning Powers, is liable, like all other things, to perversion and abuse. Indeed, the very successes of such a system will be hurtful in a high degree, if they engender a too confident reliance on those Powers, which superior excellence in them is apt to inspire: if they tend to destroy, or diminish that modest and discrete distrust of our own strength, with which all difficult subjects ought to be canvassed—that reverential awe, with which the ablest scholar is ever most strongly impressed in entering on religious inquiries. And these evils will certainly take place, if, in the conduct of such a system, particular care be not taken to keep separate and distinct the respective provinces of REASON and FAITH.

BE not misled by those, who, to obtain the renown of superior wisdom, or to avoid the reproach of a weak credulity, affect to understand more, or dare to believe less, than God has revealed.

Suffer

Suffer not yourselves to be imposed upon by that double artifice of INFIDELITY, the abusive application of opprobrious, and the affected contempt of honourable, names. Let not the ridicule, which folly has fastened to the term ORTHODOX, or the title of BIGOTRY, with which bad men have stigmatized a steady adherence to the truth, deter you from defending with a becoming spirit, the PURITY of the Christian doctrines;—the INTEGRITY of “the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints.” And for this important office, THEY whose faculties have been most invigorated by habits of attention to the SEVERER STUDIES, will commonly be the best qualified. Who can be fitter than such persons, for examining the pretensions of religious institutions, for canvassing the evidences of their truth, and for the critical interpretation of the sacred Volumes? But, to investigate the PHYSICAL ESSENCE of the Supreme BEING, the propriety and expediency of the divine proceedings, or the full nature and import of truths revealed but in part,—for such attempts no faculties are fitted, all are alike incompetent, as a late Prelate has clearly shewn in his immortal ANALOGY,—a book, which, happily for the world, is now better known in this kingdom, is in the hands of most scholars, and by their ablest Tutors and Directors recommended and explained with particular care. If this care be continued, as I am persuaded it will be, there can be no danger that the cultivation of any true science, or of the reasoning powers so directed and circumscribed, should afford the least encouragement to that PRESUMPTUOUS, PHILOSOPHIZING SPIRIT, which ever since the Christian æra has been equally hurtful both to piety and letters.

IT IS THAT Spirit, which, in every age, has steeled the hearts of certain SCIOLOGISTS against the doctrine of a divine REDEEMER, because this, and some other points of pure Revelation will not submit to the scrutiny of reason—equally unqualified to discover,

or

or explain them. On the same principle they must be dissatisfied with every system alike, the religion of nature, and nature itself being replete with inscrutable mysteries. The rude curiosity which would tear off the veil that conceals them, beside the guilt of impiety, carries with it its own punishment. The further men push their inquiries beyond the limits of science, the deeper they are immersed in the mists of ignorance. They sacrifice the unspeakable advantage of truths which every man may know, in the restless pursuit of unattainable knowledge: and unable to endure the constant anxiety of unsettled opinions, often seek refuge and repose at last in the wretched absurdities of Atheism itself.

I AM not conscious that the foregoing description is at all overcharged. Nor is it wonderful in the least, that, in proportion as learning itself is more widely diffused, the abuses of it should be more frequent and more atrocious.

To conclude.—How long the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY may continue to work, what new paths of misery it may yet strike out, and how far it may be permitted to proceed, time only can discover. The very expression discourages inquiry, and seems to prohibit the indulgence of curiosity or conjecture. It was with equal piety and good sense, that Luther said to the over-anxious Melanthon,—“Leave God to govern his own world.”—Let us trust to the wisdom, where we cannot comprehend the ways, of his Providence. Amid the awful obscurity of that great question—“THE PREVALENCE OF MORAL EVIL,” one thing is perfectly clear;—It is our duty to resist it to the utmost of our power: and the degree of such resistance is not only the TRIAL, but the MEASURE of our virtue. Even the unenlightened Heathens understood this duty, and some of them practised it too, with a zeal and perseverance

verance which would justly be admired in the best of Christians. Happily for such, the desire and ability to oppose it are now strengthened and encouraged by the promise of Divine assistance to all who endeavour well, and sincerely ask it. The **METHODS** of opposing it are also pointed out in the Scriptures for the equal benefit of every individual who applies them with equal sincerity. But to the **MEMBERS** of a **PUBLIC BODY**, and **MANAGERS** of a **LEARNED COMMUNITY**, the same Obligation has a stronger force, and a wider extent. For it is of unspeakable importance to the support of truth, and the interests of virtue and piety, that the **Studies** of **YOUTH** should be carefully conducted, and rightly directed.

THAT they may always continue to be so, we constantly implore the blessing of God on all Schools and Seminaries of sound Learning, and religious Education.

NOTE TO

'THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE.'—P. 12.

IT seems to me, that even the obsolete, exploded doctrine concerning the divine, indefeasible, hereditary right of Kings, is not more remote from the truth, than the popular maxims maintained of late by writers of confessed ability, and some of them so very respectable, that their character, should they chance to err, would almost consecrate their errors. And I think they have mistaken a mere **NATURAL POWER** for a **MORAL RIGHT**. According to their statement, two fundamental rights have been retained by the People of Great Britain: the first is that of "resuming the delegated authority of the state from the hands of governors, who deliberately and flagrantly violate the conditions on which it was committed to them." The other is, that of "making any alterations in the constitution, if extreme emergencies should ever occur, which it shall be firmly convinced that the public wealth and safety require, although the constitutional Legislature should refuse its consent."

BEFORE the People can be said to have RETAINED, some proof should be made, that they ever POSSESSED, such rights: And until we are satisfied concerning their EXISTENCE, all arguments against the RENUNCIATION of them are a mere waste of time and labour. Let us see then how they are made out. The ground of them is represented as, "security for national freedom, and the augmentation of national happiness." But the assertors of these rights are aware that the peace and stability of states would be endangered by the needless or improvident exercise of them; against which, not all the sage advice and sensible reflexions which are added to prevent such abuses, could form the least security, even under a government the best constituted and the best administered: And when we consider, what may easily happen, that, at some critical and unlucky conjuncture, the minds of the people may be strongly impressed by artful misrepresentations, by doleful pictures of imaginary grievances and abuses, or of real ones magnified beyond the just proportion; and that their vanity, flattered with high notions of their own importance, and concurring with their angry emotions, may lead them to the wildest excesses; how extremely cautious should we be in reasoning on such delicate subjects, lest the public mind should be thrown into a ferment, which no force of reasoning could afterwards allay?

BUT further, the maintenance of such maxims seems as NEEDLESS, as it is UNSAFE. For the incontestible POWER of the People is alone sufficient. In countries not habituated to slavery, grievances of a certain magnitude WILL kindle proportionate resentment, and provoke suitable measures of redress, if not retaliation.

As therefore the claims asserted are not founded on necessity, so neither are they supported by the case of the Revolution, when the POWER of the People, or Community at large, so wisely and happily exerted for its benefit, did not confine itself within the rules of strict justice, as they themselves allow. The proceedings at that period, if not regular throughout, were warranted by the EXIGENCY OF THE CASE, and not by any rights in the People, as stated above.

IF the case of the Revolution will not serve to establish their positions, still less will any human and fallible Authorities, how respectable soever, especially when the maxims they espouse are at variance with the precepts of inspired Writers. For although it would be an impious falsehood to assert, with the late Mr. Gibbon, that St. Paul preached unconditional submission under the reign of a Nero, yet the manner in which he inculcated subjection to the higher Powers, and the reasons on which he grounded that duty, very strongly militate against the notion, that the MEASURES of submission in critical emergencies, should be settled by the people; i. e. that the fate of the community should be decided by those, who are least capable of judging, and most liable to be deceived.

THE MODES and FORMS of GOVERNMENT undoubtedly depend on their choice and pleasure, but GOVERNMENT itself is the appointment of God, and the end of it, the welfare of the People, cannot be attained, unless the claims of AUTHORITY, and the duty of
SUBMISSION,

SUBMISSION, have a better support than the warm assertors of their rights are willing to allow. Even on the bold supposition, that THEY are the origin of all authority, and the judges, in the cases supposed, when to resume it, the right to resistance would have no foundation. For what is this, in reality, but a right to break through their own compact,—a right to act, in the most important of all concerns, according to the impulse of the moment, according to the dictates of fancy and caprice? For as to their firm conviction concerning the necessity of proceeding to such extremities, it might be real or pretended, well or ill founded, just as the case might be. At the Revolution, resistance was properly resorted to, by the Community at large, as the only remedy for great and incurable evils: about half a century before, it carried the guilt of rebellion; because legal modes of redress, if pursued with temper, and applied with discretion, would have made an appeal to the Sword unnecessary;—would have prevented all the miseries of a twelve year's Usurpation, and of the horrid civil war which preceded it.

EVERY Argument, which bears against the former Assertion, is, I believe, equally applicable to the latter. However, I will just add in respect to this, that, if an individual, who thinks himself in a very bad way, has NOT a right to risque the ruin of his own constitution by resorting to untried and dangerous remedies, instead of pursuing the advice of experienced Physicians; much less can the People have a right to change the Government, not only without, but even against the consent of the Legislature, though on the firmest belief that such an exercise of their power is become necessary.



admission, have a better report than the want of their rights are willing to allow. Even on the bold supposition, that they are the origin of all authority, and the judges, in the cases appealed, who to refuse it, the right to resistance would have no foundation. For what is this, in reality, but a right to break through their own compact—a right to act, in the most important of all concerns, according to the impulse of the moment, according to the dictates of fancy and caprice? For as to their constitution concerning the necessity of proceeding to such extremities, it might be well of pretended, well or ill founded, but as the case might be. At the Revolution, rebellion was properly resisted, as by the Community at large, as the only remedy for great and irreparable evils: about half a century before, it carried the guilt of rebellion, demands legal modes of redress, it pursued with respect, and applied with discretion, would have made an appeal to the sacred monarchy:—would have prevented all the miseries of a twelve years' usurpation, and of the north civil war which preceded it.

Every argument, which bears against the former Assertion, I believe, equally applicable to the latter. However, I will just add in respect to this, that it is an insidious, who thinks himself in a very bad way, has not a right to refuse the ruin of his own constitution by resorting to a violent and dangerous remedy, instead of pursuing the advice of experienced physicians, which let us can the people have a right to change the Government, not only without, but even against the consent of the Legislature, though on the firmest belief that such an exercise of their power is become necessary.

